GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:90
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2016
ICCR
Rao Shri Rayapati Sambasiva

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the functions of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR);

(b) the initiatives taken to improve cultural relations with neighbouring countries during the last three years, country-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to encourage cultural programmes among these countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) Objective of ICCR is establishing, reviving and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. Its functions include:

â€¢ Administering of scholarship schemes for overseas; Grant of scholarships to foreign students to learn Indian dance and music, Exchange of Exhibitions,
â€¢ Organizing of and participation in international conferences and seminars,
â€¢ Participating in major cultural festivals abroad, Organizing "Festivals of India" abroad; Exchange of groups of performing artistes,
â€¢ Maintain Distinguished Visitors Programme, under which eminent personalities from abroad are invited to India and Indian experts are sent abroad to deliver lectures on issues of mutual interest,
â€¢ Establish and maintain Chairs for Indian Studies in Universities abroad;
â€¢ Maintenance of Indian Cultural Centres abroad,
â€¢ Maintenance of a well-stocked library and the old Manuscripts; Awarding of Library Fellowships, Digitization of rare manuscripts,
â€¢ Presentation of books, audio-visual material, art objects and musical instruments to institutions abroad, and
â€¢ Execute MEA's projects and administer scholarships of behalf of MEA and Ministry of Ayush.

(b) Several initiatives have been taken to improve cultural relations with neighbouring countries during the last three years. ICCR has its Culture Centres active in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka through which it executes cultural activities with these countries. India has signed Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) with Bangladesh, China. Maldives and Myanmar. Under the CEPs both the countries have to jointly share the cost for activities related to culture promotion. In case of the neighbouring countries, ICCR has extended additional assistance in terms of providing local hospitality for outgoing cultural groups to these countries. Country-wise activities undertaken in last three years are annexed.

(c) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations endeavours to focus more on the neighbouring countries by way of enhancing its activities. More academic interactions with the prominent academic institutions and renowned scholars are proposed to be organized in the coming years. Special focus would be given to neighbouring countries during the celebration of International Day of Yoga 2016 and through programmes such as artists in residence and SAARC literature festival etc., subject to availability of funds.